

Tuesday English News Report: Broadcast Date: Nov 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

## Waste fee scheme delayed by a year

Hong Kong is finally pushing ahead with a **mandatory** waste charging scheme, but it will be delayed for at least a year, throwing into doubt the government's municipal rubbish reduction targets for 2022.

“The **implementation** of municipal solid waste charging sits at the centre of our overall waste reduction strategy,” Environment minister Wong said, **insisting** it was more about direction than timing. “It will provide the necessary financial **incentives** to drive behavioural and cultural changes and ... reduce waste disposal effectively.”

The minister **sidestepped** questions on whether the 40 per cent waste reduction target he set in 2014 for 2022 could still be met. This waste charging policy has been dragged on for 14 years and the public reached a **consensus** on it long ago.

The assumption was that it could be done via policies such as waste charging and better waste infrastructure.

The city of Taipei has been charging for municipal waste since 2000, and Seoul since 1995. Both have seen 30 per cent reductions in waste.

Under Hong Kong's plan, 80 per cent of rubbish **generated** by housing estates, residential buildings and shops using government refuse collection services will have to go into **designated** bags priced at an average of 11 HK cents (US\$0.01) per litre. The remaining 20 per cent will be charged by weight.

Rule breakers will be **slapped with** a HK\$1,500 fine, enforced by officers from the Environmental Protection and Food and Environmental Hygiene departments. They will be **empowered** to enter estates.

## Questions to think about:

- Do you think a waste charging scheme is necessary? Why or why not?
- What do you think will be the impact of implementing a waste charging scheme?
- Why do you think it has taken so long for Hong Kong to decide on such a scheme especially when compared with countries like Taiwan and Korea?
- What do you think Hong Kongers can do in their daily lives to help reduce waste?



Adapted from the South China Morning Post dated 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2018.

**I: Vocabulary and understanding meaning:** Match the meaning and/or synonym (words with a similar or the same meaning) to the words which have been highlighted in bold in the article.

Column A: Word from text	Letter	Column B: Meaning or synonym
1. mandatory (adj)	<b>C</b>	A: avoid
2. implementation (n)	<b>D</b>	B: a thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something
3. insist (v)	<b>F</b>	C: compulsory, demanded by law, necessary, have to do
4. incentive (n)	<b>B</b>	D: the process of putting a decision or plan into effect; execution of a plan, starting something
5. sidestep (v)	<b>A</b>	E: produce or create
6. consensus (n)	<b>I</b>	F: demand something, keep asking (for something)
7. generate (v)	<b>E</b>	G: an assigned job, post or duty or area set for something specific
8. designated (adj)	<b>G</b>	H: give someone the authority or the power to do something
9. slap (with) (verb)	<b>J</b>	I: agreement by more or less all
10. empowered	<b>H</b>	J: to subject to a fine or penalty

**II: Usage of vocabulary:** Choose the most appropriate word from the table above to fill in the missing words of the sentences below making sure your answers are grammatically correct. Use the words in italics to help you.

- The students finally reached a **consensus** on who should be their class monitor. They *all agreed* that Tom would do the job best.
- People can only park their cars in (a) **designated** areas. If they park in a different area, they may be (b) **slapped** with *a fine*, or have their cars towed away.
- Many politicians **sidestep** difficult questions. They do their best *to avoid* answering challenging questions.
- In most countries schooling is **mandatory**, in other words, all children aged between 6 and 15 *have to go to school*.
- The hot topic **generated** a lot of discussion. People talked about it for days.
- It is not easy to (a) **implement** or *launch* new policies. *Starting something new* is never easy especially if it may cost the public money. Therefore, the government may need to provide an (b) **incentive** for people to agree and get on board. The public need *encouragement*.
- Even though I wanted to pay for the meal, the friend **insisted** on paying for it as it was my birthday. He refused to let me pay no matter what I said.
- The #Metoo movement seeks to **empower** females to speak up against sexual harassment.

*ENGLISH CORNER CAFÉ IS ALWAYS OPEN ON A  
TUESDAY FOR DRINKS, SNACKS, CONVERSATION &  
GAMES*